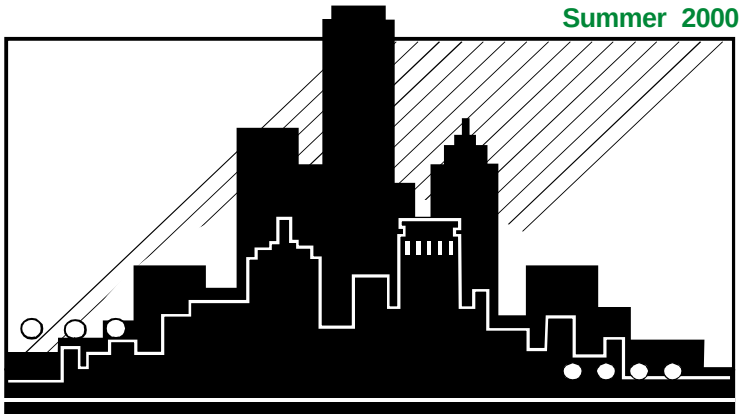
Conservation and your Community

The key to conservation is Community!

Summer 2000



Volume 4, Issue 3

U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service Chicago Metro Urban & Community Assistance Office

NRCS and IECA Make a Promise to Partner

(Taken from IECA's Erosion Control July/August 2000 issue)

A historic agreement between IECA and NRCS promises more professional development opportunities for members of both organizations and better erosion and sediment control technology and practices for the public.

Those are two of the potential payoffs of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between IECA--the erosion control industry's premiere resource for education and exchange of information--and NRCS--the federal agency in charge of protecting natural resources on private land in the United States.

The agreement, signed in February at IECA's 2000 Annual Conference in Palm Springs, reaffirms a long-standing information relationship between the two organizations, says IECA President John Peterson.

"The Memorandum of Understanding can be very effective in encouraging NRCS employees and IECA members to work together for their mutual benefit," Peterson adds. "It opens the door to a much more productive public/private partnership in solving environmental problems."

The agreement recognizes the key role both organizations play in conserving, protecting, and sustaining natural resources. In addition to expanding training opportunities for NRCS employees through IECA's educational programs, the MOU is also designed to promote closer cooperation between the two organizations in developing and promoting erosion control practices and technology. It also serves as a model for developing similar agreements between IECA and other public agencies around the world.

IECA and NRCS agree to work together in five key areas:

1. Education and Technology--The agreement recognizes that IECA members and NRCS employees have much in the way of knowledge and practical experience to offer each other in terms of developing and applying erosion control practices and educating people about using them effectively.

2. Training--"Some of the best training that NRCS employees have received has been provided by people in the erosion control industry through demonstrations of new technology and field days showing how different practices work," points out Larry Clark, NRCS Deputy Chief for Science and Technology.

At the same time, field days and other demonstrations conducted by NRCS offer a way for IECA members to expand their knowledge. By pooling their experience and expertise, this agreement also offers both organizations the opportunity to expand their educational reach in the face of any budget and staff reductions.

In fact, the MOU has already produced its first tangible benefit: All NRCS field offices will now receive Erosion Control magazine. As Clark Notes, the publication will be an effective training tool. "It offers our people in the field the opportunity to replicate and apply the technology described in the journal."

3. Professional Development--This formal agreement can also encourage NRCS employees to participate more actively in IECA conferences in both presenting technical papers and attending sessions.

4. Promoting Sound Practices--In the past, NRCS people have applied results of work conducted by USDA's Agricultural Research Service to improve conservation in rural areas. Peterson sees opportunities for NRCS personnel to work with IECA members in a wide variety of other research and demonstration projects. That should expand the range of tools that NRCS can use to solve erosion problems. In addition, the MOU could increase opportunities for IECA members to work with NRCS in funding research studies.

5. Developing Technical Erosion Control Standards--Closer ties to each other should increase collaboration between NRCS and IECA in developing standards and specifications for use throughout the erosion control industry.

(continued on page 6...)

Thoughts to Ponder . . .

By Bill Gradle, Illinois NRCS State Conservationist, Champaign, Illinois

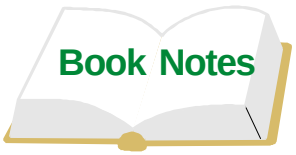
We live in a technological culture where activity occurs at a frenzied pace and where "instant" this and "instant" that is the expected standard. We demand fast modem connections, fast cars, fast food, instant online messaging, fast everything! We demand instant satisfaction to our needs and desires and to go with it, we want immediate results. When we don't get it, we feel frustrated and somehow unsatisfied. We just don't get the same sense of accomplishment when we have to wait.

Think back to the many accomplishments of our ancestors and forefathers—the ground they broke, the structures they built, the beautiful creations they crafted. Why is it people travel to places like Rome, Paris, or Egypt? They want to see marvelous creations that took years to create—the pyramids, the Taj Mahal, the ancient cathedrals of Europe. And they are in fact breath-taking creations to see. Without a doubt, they are inspirational.

Did the creators of these long-lasting and inspirational monuments demand immediate results? Did they give up or cut corners when it became obvious that this wasn't going to be a simple undertaking? Did those who began these monstrous tasks even live long enough to see them through to completion? And if they had been so impatient, would we have such wonders to look at and enjoy today? I believe the answer is no.

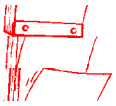
To me, it's the same with our conviction and commitment to conservation. We've taken on a challenge that may take years or decades to mature or one that we may not ever see come to fruition. Conservation is often a long and arduous task and one that may require more than one generation to fulfill. But I think it's honorable to take on something so much bigger than ourselves at least once in our lifetime. It gives us, our children, and our society a true sense of perspective. It gives us something to work towards and to struggle to achieve.

We may not always have the privilege of being able to stand back when it's done and look at it and admire it. We may not be able to measure or witness the long-term benefits our decisions will provide future generations. But even so, it's still worth dedicating our limited time and resources to a project or even a dream as admirable and honorable as the dream of conservation.



The Suburban Wild--*By Peter Friederici. Set in the North Shore suburbs of Chicago, these essays explore the importance of our connection with the natural world, history, and memory. Following the seasons, from one spring to the next, the author contemplates various natural events and experiences, from the humming of cicadas on summer evenings to the myriad hues in a green heron's feathers and the distinctive shapes of native ash, hickory, and oak trees. University of Georgia Press.*

Inside City Parks--*Published by the Trust for Public Land and the Urban Land Institute. This publication answers many questions about the park systems of our nation's 25 largest cities, providing statistics on parkland and recreation services, highlighting innovative programs and initiatives, sharing funding strategies, identifying trends, and exploring how parks are affected by the many public and private forces at work in the urban core. Visit www.tpl.org/cityparks for more details.*



Events, Workshops, Meetings, Conferences . . .

The Environmental SuperConference, October 18-20, 2000, The Capital Hilton, Washington D.C. Call 800-274-0122 or visit www.bpinews.com/conference/enviro for more details & information.

International Erosion Control Association's 32nd Annual Conference and Expo, February 5-9, 2001 in Las Vegas, NV. See their website at www.ieca.org

Diffuse/Nonpoint Pollution and Watershed Management, 5th International Conference, June 10-15, 2001, Milwaukee, WI. Sponsored by the International Water Association. See http://www.mu.edu/environment.iwa-page.htm for details.

Urban Wetlands: Protecting and Enhancing the Resource; Society of Wetland Scientists, 22nd Annual Conference, May 27 - June 1, 2001, Chicago, IL. Contact Mike Miller (217) 333-7093 or see www.sws.org for more details.

Illinois Renewable Natural Resources Conference, March 7-9, 2001, Peoria, IL. Sponsored by Illinois Chapters of the Wildlife Society, American Fisheries, SWCSI, Society of American Foresters, and the Environmental Education Association.

Illinois GIS Association's Annual Meeting, Nov. 6-7, 2000 in Lisle, IL. Call (815) 753-1906 for more information.

NRCS Directory

William J. Gradle
NRCS State Conservationist
Illinois NRCS State Office
1902 Fox Drive
Champaign, IL 61820
PH: (217) 353-6600
FX: (217) 353-6676

Chicago Metro Office
Kent Sims, Team Leader
Dale Calsyn, Soil Survey Leader
603 East Diehl Road Suite #131
Naperville, IL 60563-1476
PH: (630) 505-7808 /Soils-505-7819
FX: (630) 505-7992

Lue A. Walters, Asst. State Conservationist, Community Assistance
402 North Kays Drive
Normal, IL 61761
PH: (309) 452-2492 Ext. 111
FX: (309) 452-6642

Chicago URP Office
Tom Dilley, URP Coordinator
c/o Dept. of Housing and Urban Dev.
77 W. Jackson St.
Chicago, IL 60604
PH: (312) 353-2473
FX: (312) 353-0117

East St. Louis Community Assistance Office
Rena Cheeseboro, URP Coordinator
100 N. 8th St.
East St. Louis, IL 62201
PH: (618) 271-9540/FX: 271-7592

GRAND Office
Barry Hamilton, Team Leader
1847 Dunn Road
Florissant, MO 63033-6116
PH: (618) 830-3790

To contact your local County NRCS office, look in the phone book under U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture or the NRCS website.

Visit NRCS' Internet Homepage at: http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA NRCS
Natural Resources Conservation Service

NRCS Profile: District Conservationist Robert Jankowski

Growing up on a farm in northern Wisconsin, Bob Jankowski became aware of conservation early on. His father developed this interest by taking him on countless fishing excursions, hunting trips, and sportsman club meetings. It's not surprising that when he graduated from Southern Illinois University in 1973, Bob had a B.S. in Wildlife Management and a minor in Forestry and Plant Sciences.

He began his career with SCS in 1977 as a Soil Conservationist Trainee in Ottawa, Illinois and moved on to Joliet in 1981 as a Soil Conservationist. These early years educated Bob in field work and public relations. He also gained a real appreciation for the work done by SCS and people like Alan Madison and Alan May who provided thorough background training for the "new conservationist on the block." This early work prepared him for his next move in 1984 when he became District Conservationist in Kendall County. In 1991, Bob took his current position as District Conservationist at the Will-South Cook Field Office.

As the DC of a highly-urbanized and rapidly-growing area, Bob has to stay a step ahead of the game in providing technical assistance to both the urban and the agricultural sectors. By keeping in touch with a network of contacts who may become involved in future projects, he helps the planning and implementation process run as quickly and smoothly as possible. This approach to communication has helped Bob educate the public about NRCS products and services and has kept NRCS aware of public needs and concerns. "In our urban areas, individuals requesting assistance are not always the decision-makers, so it's been important to work through a network of people and become acquainted with—and maintain contact with—key decision makers in many communities."

Bob has also been looking out for the future of conservation. He orchestrated NRCS' technical assistance and guidance for the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences, the only high school in Chicago with a curriculum in agriculture.

With NRCS as a partner and strong technical ally, the school is better able to provide students with field training and a better appreciation of conservation issues. Bob sees his contribution as bringing a new way of thinking about conservation and offering a new set of career options to interested students. This work fits right in with Bob's personal conservation goal of providing opportunities for the public to become more aware of our resources and the opportunities we have to enhance them.

Bob is committed to expanding NRCS assistance to a growing, urbanizing area and continues to develop new partnerships while strengthening old ones. "Our strength is our understanding of natural resource conservation and our future is to maintain our high level of commitment to the public we serve."

Conservation Concepts...

....Urban Stormwater Wetlands

Taken from NRCS' Urban Manual

Natural wetlands do a great job of storing excess stormwater, filtering pollutants out of the water, and creating plant and wildlife habitats. Although man-made, stormwater wetlands provide the same benefits in urban areas. Developers and local governments realize that creating wetlands in urban or developing areas experiencing stormwater management problems is a smart way to plan ahead.

Given the differring characteristics and needs of communities, planning a stormwater wetland is site-specific and requires an interdisciplinary design team with expertise in stormwater engineering, wetlands, landscaping, and pond construction. Such a planning team is most capable of establishing the correct site and construction specifications while avoiding or reducing undesirable secondary impacts from the construction and operation of the wetland.

While each site is unique, there are a few basic concepts required for a successful "urban wetland." Before the runoff reaches the wetland, it should first pass through a pretreatment area such, as a forebay or presettling basin. This reduces the velocity of the water and traps coarse sediment. The wetland itself should be capable of storing and filtering runoff produced by 90% of storms in the watershed. The volume, area, depth, flow path design, and dry weather water balance are just some of the design factors that affect the wetland's total capacity. Altering these specifications can increase the wetland's ability to remove pollutants. For instance, increasing the surface area in proportion to the volume of runoff can create a complex "microtopography" and more extensive plant cover which can help filter out more pollutants.

Another important issue is to establish a plant community in the shortest possible time to reduce erosion during construction. The wetland should contain a variety of depth zones, which will allow for dense and diverse plant life. This not only augments pollution removal, but also gives a natural appearance and creates wildlife habitat. Choosing the right plants and proper landscaping can encourage wildlife and discourage undesirable habitats that attract nuisance wildlife.

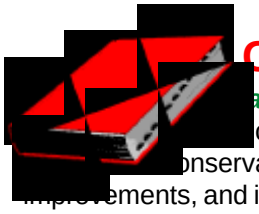
Be sure your wetland plans ensure that funding will be available for upkeep and provide a strategy for operations and maintenance with a strong emphasis on the first three years. Sediment must be removed from the pretreatment structures every 3-5 years. Also, maintenance access areas should be mowed once a year to prevent woody growth, but the remaining areas can be managed as a wet meadow or forest. While conducting regular site inspections, be sure to track and record the progressive development of the site. A stormwater wetland can be an attractive, valuable, and safe community amenity as long as you keep the future in mind.

New Partnership Venture for 2000

USDA launched a national project designed to encourage private organizations, companies, and individuals across the Nation to plant or adopt a tree, establish or improve a garden, or protect or care for a special natural resource treasure in honor of the new millennium. The goal of the project is to encourage, promote, and recognize the creation of healthier, more livable community environments for the new millennium.

The program hopes to call people to action and get volunteers who will engage in "hands on" community-based stewardship through planting and tending trees, groves, and gardens. It also hopes to raise awareness and call people to care for special natural resource wonders and treasures in cities, towns, backyards, schools, and neighborhoods. Special natural resource wonders and treasures include landmark or heritage trees, groves, wetlands, streams, wildlife habitat, etc.

The project originated from the White House Millennium Council, which is led by the Department of Agriculture working in partnership with EPA, and the Departments of Energy, Transportation, Interior, Education, and Justice. By working in our communities, schools, and in our own backyards, we can each do our part to nurture and care for our natural resources. For more details on the program or to register a community success story or project, visit the website at www.green.gov or www.gardening.usda.gov



Conservation Terminology

***ater Control/Water Management*--**The cal control of water by such measures as onservation practices on land, channel ements, and installation of structures for water retardation and sediment detention; does not refer to legal control of water rights.

Had a Change of Heart?

If you are currently on our mailing list but no longer want to receive this newsletter, please let us know. Current budget restraints require NRCS to cut costs wherever possible. Please call us at (630) 505-7808 to be removed from our list of subscribers. Thanks!

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Call or send information to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Chicago Metro Office, 603 East Diehl Road, Suite #131, Naperville, IL 60563; PH: (630) 505-7808/FX: (630) 505-7992. ***THANK YOU!***

The Best Neighbor Usually a Tree

Adapted from material of the National Arbor Day Foundation

Whether you live in town, in the suburbs, or out in the country, a good neighbor can make all the difference in how we rate our "quality of life." Besides your human roommates, consider the valuable role trees play for ou and take note of the many benefi we often take for granted.

Reduce Energy Costs

Trees have been called the "low tech" solution to energy conservation. Shade from trees reduces the need for air conditioning in summer. In winter, trees break the force of winter winds, lowering heating costs. Studies show that parts of cities without cooling shade from trees can literally become "heat islands," with temperatures as much as 12^0 higher than surrounding areas.

Clean the Air

Trees produce oxygen that we breathe. They remove air pollution by lowering air temperatures, by releasing water into the atmosphere, and by retaining particulates. By reducing the need for heating and cooling systems, trees also reduce emissions that contribute to atmospheric carbon dioxide and the greenhouse effect.

Produce Economic Benefits

Trees add value to retail areas by making them more attractive places for shopping. Trees along streets and on private property increase property values. Studies conducted in two communities in New York and Connecticut showed that the presence of trees increased the selling price of homes by as much as 15%.

Screen Noise and Undesirable Views

Strips of densely planted trees and shrubs will not completely remove the annoyance of city noise, but they can significantly reduce it. Urban forestry researchers have shown that even narrow belts of trees can reduce noise by 3 - 5 decibels. And, trees can provide privacy or screen out undesirable views.

Attract Wildlife

Trees can provide habitat for songbirds and other desirable wildlife, adding natural sounds and beauty in an urban environment.

Slow Runoff and Prevent Erosion

The leaves of trees break the force of rain, reducing flooding by helping water percolate into the soil instead of quickly running off. Tree roots also help to hold the soil in place on steeper hillsides, preventing erosion and improving water quality.

Carbon Sequestration... Translation Please!

It's a word we've heard a lot about lately. What the heck is it? Let's start by defining the words.

Carbon is a nonmetallic chemical element found in all organic (living or once-living) compounds and is the source of energy (food) for nearly all organisms. It is a minor component of the atmosphere that plays a major role in making the climate habitable. ***Sequestration*** is the act of removing, separating, or laying aside.

Humm...we're made of it, we eat it, it makes the earth habitable...so why do we need to remove it from the atmosphere and lay it aside?

Good question. Well, for starters, keep in mind that the dose makes the poison; remember, water is good for you unless you drowned in it. Mars has only 0.5% of the atmospheric mass of the earth and the average surface temperature is 120^0 colder. The atmospheric mass of Venus is 100 times greater than ours and the temperature is 820^0 hotter than the earth's. There is still controversy over whether we are altering the climate or if the climate is experiencing a natural fluctuation. Regardless of who is right, the fact the human race has pumped mass quantities of carbon into the atmosphere through the burning of fossil fuels and rainforests and tilling up the prairies cannot be denied.

So, how do we go about sequestering carbon and why should the NRCS be involved? Believe it or not, NRCS has been involved with carbon sequestration for years--we just never called it that. We call it conservation.

Reducing soil erosion and encouraging the use of conservation tillage methods on our farms lessens the loss of soil carbon to the atmosphere. Increasing residue in the field, using crop rotations, cover crops, and perennial crops (rangeland) are all practices that remove carbon from the atmosphere, via photosynthesis, and store it in the soil.

The less we disturb soil--whether in the rural or urban environment--the more carbon we keep in check underground. Urban activities such as development and land use changes that un-lock and 'stir up' carbon, could essentially be balanced by conservation activities done on neighboring farms. The inter-connected relationship between cities and farms could play a vital role in helping us manage our carbon "checkbook," and help us do our part to sustain the global health of Planet Earth.

These practices are good for the atmosphere, the environment in general, and good for soil quality. On top of that, there are rumors industry may be willing to pay landowners to sequester the carbon they emit into the atmosphere. The thorn on this rose is bound to be the task of regulation, monitoring, and measuring this invisible, yet valuable commodity

NRCS Partner Profiles:

Lake County Department of Management Services

Back in 1941Lake County's Board created a Map Department that eventually became their present GIS Division in their Department of Management Services. The GIS Division coordinates the County's GIS program, providing support for their many agencies, in addition to the responsibility for tax parcel and environmental mapping. They also promote information exchange, currently working with more than fifty data sharing partners. The County's diverse land uses-forest preserve districts, lakes, wetlands, and metro areas-presented the perfect challenge for GIS technology. According to Richard Hilton, Management Service's GIS Manager, "The Board has always encouraged the development of our GIS and created a climate where partnerships and inter-governmental information exchange and data sharing have become commonplace."

In 1988, Lake County began work with NRCS to produce the first digitized survey in Illinois. The digital soils information is a foundation component in the County's GIS, with many practical applications. Since then, they have coordinated the acquisition and incorporation of more data from a wide range of departments and state and federal agencies. "You never stop adding and updating data," says Hilton. "Our data has become crucial for successfully managing the business of the County and addressing storm water, flooding, development, land acquisition, preservation, restoration and planning concerns."

"Lake County is using GIS the way it was intended; the way we all will use it someday." says NRCS State Soil Scientist Bob McLeese. Hilton is a recognized leader in GIS in Illinois and a true believer in the value of partners. "As you 'build' data layers, you build relationships with partners and players and learn that they have data you need, and you have data they need." Hilton says sharing data between departments and partners actually accelerates GIS development for the county and for others involved. This is typically done at no cost where existing data is exchanged, or may be jointly funded when new data needs to be created.

According to Hilton, partnering with NRCS was natural and the two agencies have worked on a number of endeavors. One such project is the Lake County Wetland Inventory (LCWI), an interagency effort involving NRCS, US Fish & Wildlife Service, EPA, and the Corps of Engineers. The project is the first of its kind, capturing wetlands found on both agricultural and urban land, and was completed in 1993. They are presently updating the inventory using GIS to evaluate land use changes caused by urban development. Both agencies have also worked with a host of other natural resource partners on ADID-Advanced Identification of Wetlands, the development of local ordinances for controlling erosion and sediment, and land use plans. Management Services also worked with the Lake County SWCD, helping them to develop their own GIS.

"Lake County is an excellent example of a county committed to protecting natural resources and interested in working together with partners by embracing the benefits of new technology," says NRCS State Conservationist Bill Gradle. "We've seen more counties across the state that have followed their lead, which is exactly where they need to go. "

IECA-NRCS MOU

(continued from page 1)

"NRCS people have a long history of dealing with conservation practice standards, fitting them into conservation plans, and making them work," says Clark. "The Memorandum of Understanding lays the framework for NRCS to participate in developing standards for use in urban and developing areas."

At the same time, the agreement offers a way for IECA members to provide input to federal agencies in developing and modifying standards and specifications important to the erosion control industry.

The principals for developing the MOU were IECA member and past Great Rivers Chapter President Doug Gahn, CPESC, and NRCS' J. Marc Safley, National Agricultural Ecologist.

Does Going "Green" Really Cost More?

Most of us think that the costs associated with environmentally-friendly subdivision development are what keeps sediments flowing off of new construction sites. Is it really more costly or could it actually be profitable?

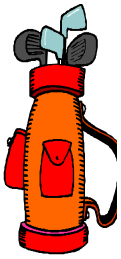
A study made possible through Purdue University, the St. Joseph SWCD in Indiana, the Indiana DNR, and the Great Lakes Basin Program for Erosion and Sediment Control revealed that developers can actually improve their profit margin by using greening techniques.

The study revealed that developers think there is only a very small increase in the value of a lot seeded down with grass, but home buyers tend to put a high premium on vegetated lots. The bottom line is that buyers perceive grass covered lots to be more desirable than lots with bare soil and they are willing and prepared to pay more for vegetated lots.

Developers who "invest" in vegetating lots can pocket a 150% return on their initial costs for seeding and mulching the site. Research also verifies that widespread seeding and mulching on residential construction sites reduces soil erosion by up to 86% and reduces phosphorus loading by up to 80%.

Whether we add soil and water conservation into the mix for environmental/stewardship reasons or for economic reasons, it seems that everyone--the buyer, the developer, the environment, and even the real estate agent--wins in the end with conservation!

Better Than Par!



Taken from an article from NRCS' California Current Developments newsletter written by Emmett Cartier, Urban Conservationist

NRCS Soil Conservation Technician Bob Dunkle, from the San Jacinto Field Office spent some time on the green (*working* not golfing!) as he helped the San Francisco Urban Team with an irrigation water management project for Sharp Park Golf Course in Pacifica, California. The course is owned and operated by the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department.

Course Superintendent John Farley asked for NRCS' assistance and arranged golf play around the project. He was interested not only in water conservation, but also savings in labor costs, applications for new technology, and pest management.

As part of their irrigation system evaluation, Dunkle and Earth Team Volunteer Linda Dunkle examined the climate, soils, and other site factors, which proved important, since the coastal location has heavy summer fog and sandy subsoils. They learned the layout and operation of the automatic sprinkler system on day one. The team sampled water distribution by placing collection cans in a 10-foot grid around sprinklers on the large course and then turned them on for a measured period of time. Water depth in each can indicated average amounts of water reaching the turf in each sector. Areas were identified that best represented tees, fairways, and greens on the 18-year old course, and they then determined coverage by the three irrigation subsystems.

Data from these samples were entered into a computer which analyzed water distribution. At Sharp Park, uniformities of the sampled distributions were found to be as low as 14%, with an average uniformity of 50% for the six sites evaluated. Distributions were plotted out by a laptop computer in a 3-D visual print out, providing an interesting and useful display for the course staff.

Other factors evaluated included irrigation scheduling, plant materials, and site conditions. Based on the findings during the field work, Dunkle was able to suggest a few improvements for the irrigation system, including placement and type of sprinkler heads, soil drainage, and specific inspections for the system components. Dunkle also provided many technical references to help the client make the most of their available staff and resources.

Improvements made possible by NRCS' contributions will quickly lower water and energy costs for the golf course. Over time, improvements in the quality of the turf will also become evident. In the past, uneven irrigation has created areas of excessively wet or excessively dry soil and made the turf more vulnerable to fungus problems.

Urban Conservationist Emmett Cartier assisted in part of the field work in order to prepare for future NRCS assistance, since irrigated turf management is so extensive and so important to water conservation issues associated with the City of San Francisco. After the success at this golf course, other courses identified irrigation and water management needs. NRCS will provide training in order to transfer concepts, technology, and knowledge to the city's Recreation and Park Department.

NPDES--The Sequel!

By: Kent Sims, Soil Conservationist, Chicago Metro Community Assistance Office

The final rule for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II was published by USEPA in the Federal Register on December 8, 1999. It updates Phase I rules that have been in effect since 1990 and expands program requirements and areas covered. In Illinois, the NPDES storm water program is administered by the Illinois EPA.

Phase II addresses storm water discharges from small municipal separate storm sewers (MS4s) serving less than 100,000 persons and construction sites that disturb more than 1 acre. Current rules cover MS4s serving more than 100,000 persons and construction sites of five or more acres. Governmental entities affected include those that operate a MS4 and are located fully or partially within an urbanized area as well as those located outside of an urbanized area with a population of 10,000 and a population density of at least 1000. An urbanized area is one where the combined population of a county and adjoining municipalities is 50,000.

The new rules require that a regulated small MS4 operator develop and implement a storm water management program to reduce the discharge of pollutants to protect water quality. The program must include the following six minimum measures: public education and outreach on stormwater impacts; public involvement and participation; illicit discharge detection and elimination; construction site storm water runoff control; post-construction storm water management in new development and redevelopment; and pollution prevention/good housekeeping for municipal operations.

Between now and 2003, when local programs must be in place, it is anticipated both U.S. and Illinois EPA will be issuing additional guidance to help implement the regulations. Additional information is currently available on the Internet at www.epa.gov/owm/sw/phase2. Counties and municipalities are encouraged to review their current storm water programs and regulations and begin to plan for implementing the new requirements.

NRCS and county SWCDs can provide assistance in assessing local programs and developing materials that will meet the required minimum measures. A series of workshops, co-sponsored by NRCS, SWCD, University of Illinois Extension, and IEPA, are planned this fall to explain program requirements and assistance available:

October 12 - Joliet, IL
October 24 - Sycamore, IL
November 9 - Bloomington, IL

This newsletter is published quarterly by USDA NRCS. Send correspondence, articles, photos, calendar items, or questions to Paige Mitchell-Buck, Conservation and your Community Editor c/o NRCS , 1902 Fox Drive, Champaign, IL 61820 or call (217) 353-6606

Newsletter Now Available on Web

Beginning with the summer 2000 issue, the ***Conservation and Your Community*** newsletter is available on the web at NRCS Illinois website www.il.nrcs.usda.gov. If you are currently receiving our newsletter through the mail, and would prefer to read it from our homepage, please let us know so that we can save on printing and mailing costs.

Urban Manual Revisions Available

The third set of revisions to the Illinois Urban Manual is now available. Consisting of 300 pages, the third revision contains one revised and two new tree protection practice standards, and complete replacements of Section 5 Construction Specifications and Section 6 Material Specifications. Instructions for use of the construction specifications have been added. A new appendix containing information and forms on the NPDES Construction Site Permit is also included.

The revision is available through the SWCD where the original manual was obtained and is also available at the Illinois NRCS website www.il.nrcs.usda.gov under manuals. Note that the revisions do not contain the complete Illinois Urban Manual. They are additions or changes to the original manual. In order to have the latest version of the manual, download the 1995 edition and all of the revisions. Text documents are in Portable Document Format (pdf). They can be read and printed using the free Adobe Acrobat Reader available through the website.

The Illinois Urban Manual website is in the process of being redone to allow for individual practice standard, specification, and standard drawing viewing and download. Links will be created between practice standards and corresponding construction and material specifications and standard drawings. The complete current version of the manual and individual sections will also be available for viewing and download. We hope that this will make the information more easily accessible to users of the manual. With Phase II NPDES requirements becoming effective in 2003 (see related article to left), many additional users of the manual are expected.

Places to Visit . . .

If you haven't ventured up to Chicago's Field Museum to check out their newest permanent exhibit, make plans to head up for a special trip this fall! The exhibit is totally dedicated to the mysteries and miracles of SOIL and has proved to be quite fun and educational for visitors of all ages! Whether you're in the business of soil and water conservation or not, this is well worth the trip!

USDA NRCS
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Illinois NRCS
Community Assistance
Vision

To provide Illinois communities, units of government, and other clients with quality NRCS products and services that balance land development needs with natural resource conservation issues. This goal will be accomplished by a NRCS network of professional teams working together to address significant community issues

Newsletter Highlights: